

Message Text

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ORIGIN EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 AID-20 OMB-01 /127 R

DRAFTED BY EA/ P: STAFF: PP

5/14/73 EXT 22538

APPROVED BY EA/ P: AHROSEN

----- 073497

R 152311 Z MAY 73

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

USDEL JEC PARIS

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMEMBASSY MANILA

CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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TAGS: PFOR, XC, US

SUBJECT: MAY 15 INDOCHINA PRESS SUMMARY

1. POST'S MURDER REPORTS DOS SAYS 16-17,000 THAI

IRREGULARS SERVING IN LAOS AT YEARLY COST " ABOVE \$100 MILLION." DOS OFFICIALS TELL MARDER GODLEY' S \$26 MILLION FIGURE GIVEN SFRC LAST WEEK WAS " BASICALLY A PAYROLL FIGURE," AND TOTAL COST OF ARMS, EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE COMES TO OVER \$100 MILLION. ACCORDING MARDER, SPOKESMAN YESTERDAY SAID IRREGULARS' BUILDUP REACHED PEAK IN FINAL MONTHS 1972 FROM 4-6,000 MID-1971 LOW (WP).

2. 500 HUNGRY FANK MARCH INTO PP TO PROTEST LACK OF FOOD AND PAY, SCATTERING CLIENTELE AT LEADING HOTEL WITH SHOTS IN AIR. DEMONSTRATION ENDED WHEN DIVISION COMMANDER PRODUCED PAPER BAG FILLED WITH MONEY AND DOLED OUT EQUIVALENT OF \$17 FOR EACH SOLDIER (SUN, NYDN, CHITRIB).

3. YESTERDAY' S SFRC AND SENATE DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE VOTES AGAINST FUNDS FOR US BOMBING IN CAMBODIA ARE DESCRIBED BY POST' S RICH AS " DOUBLE- BARRELED CHALLENGE" AND BY SUN' S CORDDRY AS " ONE- TWO PUNCH" DIRECTED AGAINST US MILITARY OPS IN INDOCHINA. CASE-CHURCH AMENDMENT TO DOS FUNDS BILL BANS USE OF ANY PRESENT OR PAST USG FUNDS TO FINANCE ANY US COMBAT OR BOMBING ACTIVITIES IN INDOCHINA. APPROPRIATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE VOTE FORBIDS DOD TRANSFER FUNDS TO BOMB LAOS OR CAMBODIA, BUT DOES NOT APPLY TO FUNDS PREVIOUSLY VOTED. FULL COMMITTEE VOTE TODAY. SFRC ALSO AMENDS DOS FUNDS BILL TO PROHIBIT FURTHER US CONTRIBUTIONS FOR SEATO HQ BEGINNING JULY 1, 1974. RICH REPORTS MANSFIELD MAY WISH BRING APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE BILL TO FLOOR VOTE THURSDAY OR FRIDAY, BUT BELIEVES REPUBLICANS WILL FORCE DELAY DUE HAK- THO TALKS.

4. NYT' S FINNEY REPORTS ADMIN STRATEGY IS PLAY FOR TIME UNTIL KHMER C- F ACHIEVED OR IT DECIDES BOMBING NO LONGER NECESSARY. AT CONFIRMATION HEARING, RICHARDSON ACKNOWLEDGES CONGRESS CAN PASS LAW STOPPING BOMBING UNCLASSIFIED

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AND SAYS IF CASE- CHURCH AMENDMENT PASSED, HE WOULD ADVISE PRESIDENT BOMBING SHOULD CEASE. FINNEY SAYS DEBATE COMES AT AWKWARD TIME FOR HAK, AND WH REPS VAINLY SOUGHT TO HAVE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE DEFER DEBATE UNTIL AFTER HAK- THO TALKS.

5. DEMOCRATIC REPS. MITCHELL, BADILLO, ROSENTHAL, FRASER, KASTENMEIER, EDWARDS, HARRINGTON, AND ABZUG SUE RICHARDSON AND OTHER TOP DOD OFFICIALS, CLAIMING ADMIN POLICY PREVENTS THEM AS MEMBERS OF CONGRESS FROM PARTICIPATING IN DECISIONS RELATING TO USG COMBAT OPS IN CAMBODIA (WP).

6. NYT'S FLORA LEWIS, IN PARIS, REPORTS THO'S THREAT TO CANCEL HAK TALK IF ALLEGED US AIR STRIKES ON COMMUNIST-HELD AREAS NEAR CAMBODIA BORDER NOT STOPPED. DRV PARIS AIDE EXPECTS TALKS TO LAST WEEK, ALTHOUGH THO WILL REMAIN IN PARIS FOR "LONG TIME." FRIEDHEIM SAYS US NOT CARRYING OUT AIR OPS OVER SVN, NO EVIDENCE OF ACCIDENTAL STRIKES SPILLING OVER FROM CAMBODIA, AND US KNOWS WHERE BORDER IS. PRG PARIS OFFICIAL, ASKED ABOUT IMPACT OF HAK MOSCOW TALKS, SAYS: "YOU MUST LEARN THAT VIETNAM PROBLEMS CAN ONLY BE SETTLED WITH VIETNAMESE." ICCS UNANIMOUSLY AGREES INVESTIGATE COMMUNIST CHARGES OF AIR STRIKES, AND EMBASSY SPOKESMAN SAYS US "WELCOMES ANY INVESTIGATION" (SUN). AP (NYT) REPORTS GAUVIN SAYS VC WOULD HAVE TO GUARANTEE SAFETY ICCS INVESTIGATORS. ICCS TO INVESTIGATE SHELLING OF ITS BEN CAT COMPOUND. SVN FIGHTING AT LOW LEVEL.

7. GVN IN LETTER TO DRV CALLS FOR OPEN, IMMEDIATE NEGOTS TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES. LETTER SAYS SUCH NEGOTS FORESEEN UNDER VN AGREEMENT PENDING FUTURE REUNIFICATION OF COUNTRIES (NYT, CHITRIB, SUN, WP).

8. SUN MOSCOW BUREAU REPORTS KIRILENKO'S ASSERTION DURING THO VISIT THAT USSR WANTS "PEACE IN ALL INDOCHINA" IS GENERALLY READ IN MOSCOW AS PUBLIC ENDORSEMENT OF US STAND. KIRILENKO ALSO SAID TO HAVE UNCLASSIFIED

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MADE CLEAR THAT SOVIET AID TO HANOI IS AIMED PRIMARILY AT RECONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF AREA IN PEACE. USUAL THEMES OF SUPPORT FOR NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AGAINST IMPERIALISTS, ETC., WERE PLAYED DOWN OR MISSING, ACCORDING SUN. LANGUAGE AND TONE OF KIRILENKO STATEMENTS STRUCK MANY WESTERN AND COMMUNIST OBSERVERS IN MOSCOW AS "ALMOST AN ECHO OF AMERICAN STATEMENTS." HAK REPORTED TO HAVE TOLD BREZHNEV VN AGREEMENT SERIOUSLY THREATENED BY CONTINUED HIGH LEVEL OF FIGHTING IN INDOCHINA AND TO HAVE ASKED FOR SOVIET ASSISTANCE IN SECURING STRICT C-F. FLORA LEWIS IN PARIS REPORTS, WITHOUT ELABORATION, THAT HAK "SAID THAT THE SOVIET UNION APPEARED TO HAVE RECOGNIZED ITS 'RESPONSIBILITY' IN THE CEASE-FIRE AGREEMENT BY DISCONTINUING HEAVY-ARMS SHIPMENTS TO HANOI" (NYT).

9. US INTELLIGENCE ANALYSTS STUDYING INDICATIONS MOSCOW AND PEKING MAY BE TRYING RESTRAIN VN COMMUNISTS FROM PUSHING FOR EARLY MILITARY VICTORY IN SVN, AND OBSERVE C-F. MOSCOW AND PEKING, ACCORDING THIS ACCOUNT, HAVE INDICATED THEY WILL PROVIDE RECONSTRUCTION AID ONLY IF LEVEL OF FIGHTING IS KEPT DOWN (CSM, CHITRIB).

10. POST'S LIPPMAN, IN SAIGON, REPORTS VC CONCENTRATING ON CONSOLIDATION OF AREAS THEY CONTROL, NOT PLANNING MAJOR MILITARY THRUST. THIEU SAID TO BELIEVE THIS IS CASE. INTELLIGENCE ANALYSTS SAY COMMUNISTS HAVE RECEIVED ORDERS TO SUBORDINATE MILITARY EXPANSION TO POLITICAL PROGRAMS WITHIN AREAS THEY CONTROL. US EMBASSY SOURCES NOW SEE LITTLE DANGER OF MAJOR MILITARY CONFRONTATION. ON CONTRARY, ACCORDING US OFFICIAL, - BIGGEST JOLT FOR THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE IS NOT GOING TO COME FROM THE ENEMY. IT'S GOING TO COME WHEN WE START TIGHTENING THE PURSE STRINGS ON MILITARY AID."

11. SAVILLE DAVIS (CSM), IN BANGKOK, FINDS SENSE OF INCREASING ASSURANCE AND SELF-CONFIDENCE AMONG THAI. SAYS DESPITE INITIAL SHOCK WHEN NIXON DOCTRINE ENUNCIATED, THAI NO LONGER FEAR U. S. WILL ABRUPTLY DUMP THEM, AND NO LONGER ARE APPREHENSIVE THAT CHINA WILL MOVE SOUTH MASSIVELY WHEN U. S. PRESENCE IN UNCLASSIFIED

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THAILAND REDUCED. SIMILARLY, THAI NO LONGER FEAR NVN MIGHT TAKE THEM ON NEXT, AND ARE NO LONGER AFRAID THEIR DOMESTIC COMMUNIST INSURGENCY MIGHT GET OUT OF CONTROL. RTG, WITH REST OF ASEAN, LOOKS FORWARD TO GREATER REGIONAL COOPERATION, GOOD RELATIONS WITH PRC AND WILL WORK FOR INCLUSION OF BOTH VNS, BURMA, LAOS AND CAMBODIA IN ASEAN.

12. WSJ ARGUES THAT PRESIDENT AND HAK, HAVING STEERED US ALL THIS WAY IN INDOCHINA, DESERVE AMPLE OPPORTUNITY WRAP UP LOOSE ENDS. THEY HAVE MANAGED WITHDRAWAL FROM VN FAR BETTER THAN ANYONE COULD HAVE PREDICTED, CONSISTENTLY PROVING THEMSELVES RIGHT AND THEIR CONGRESSIONAL CRITICS WRONG. BUT ADMIN WRONG IN PLANNING CONTINUE CAMBODIA BOMBING REGARDLESS OF WHAT CONGRESS DOES.

13. AP NYDN CITES LATEST GALLUP POLL AS SAYING AMERICANS OPPOSE CAMBODIA BOMBING BY NEARLY 2- TO-1; BY ABOUT SAME MARGIN THEY BELIEVE BOMBING WILL LEAD TO REINVOLVEMENT US TROOPS IN SEA.

14. NYT, REFERRING TO SENATE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ACCEPTANCE OF HOUSE PROHIBITION ON TRANSFER OF FUNDS FOR BOMBING IN CAMBODIA AND INDICATIONS THAT ADMIN WILL IGNORE BAN EVEN IF ENDORSED BY CONGRESS, COMMENTS THAT DEVELOPING CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS SHOULD BE RESOLVED DECISIVELY IN FAVOR OF CONGRESS IF SYSTEM OF CHECKS AND BALANCES TO BE PRESERVED. IN RELATED EDITORIAL, NYT ALLUDES TO ADMIN ADMISSION US IS FUNDING PRESENCE OF 15,000 TO 20,000 THAI "IRREGULARS"

IN LAOS. SAYS THIS IS ANOTHER SHOCKING ILLUSTRATION OF ADMIN' S DISREGARD OF CONGRESS AND CONSTITUTION. MOREOVER, US SUPPORT OF THAI MERCENARIES VIOLATES SPIRIT OF PARIS ACCORDS AND CONTRADICTS ADMIN CLAIMS IT IS DISENGAGING FROM INDOCHINA; ESPBCIALLY IF, AS SENATE SOURCE INDICATED, THEIR NUMBERS WERE DRASTICALLY INCREASED LATE LAST YEAR IN ANTICIPATION VN C- F. CONGRESS OBVIOUSLY MUST TAKE ADDITIONAL STEPS TO INSURE ITS WILL FOLLOWED IN LAOS AND THROUGHOUT INDOCHINA.

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15. JAMES PERRY OF NATIONAL OBSERVER (MAY 19) MENTIONS MOOSE/ LOWENSTEIN REPORT THAT WHEN THEY ARRIVED IN PP APRIL 5, EMBASSY OFFICIALS REFUSED GIVE BRIEFING ON AIR OPERATIONS REQUESTED WELL IN ADVANCE OF THEIR ARRIVAL. DURING FIRST FEW DAYS, EMBASSY OFFICIALS LEFT IMPRESSION OF MINIMAL EMBASSY ROLE IN AIR WAR. IMPRESSION QUICKLY REFUTED WHEN UPI CORRESPONDENT SYLVANA FOA HANDED LOWENSTEIN/ MOOSE \$16 COMMERCIAL RADIO TUNED TO TRANSMISSION FROM US AIRCRAFT, INDICATING US EMBASSY WAS DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN COORDINATION OF AIR ACTIVITIES WHILE ACTION STILL IN PROGRESS. LOWENSTEIN/ MOOSE FOUND THAT EMBASSY " VALIDATES ALL B52 F111 STRIKES." BUT BULK OF REQUESTS FOR STRIKES COMES FROM CAMBODIA GENERAL STAFF. PROBLEM IS EMBASSY WORKING FROM MAPS SEVERAL YEARS OLD WITHOUT IDENTIFICATION OF NEW OR RELOCATED VILLAGES INHABITED BY CIVILIANS. CONCLUDES THAT FOR SHORT TERM, BOMBING WILL CONTINUE BECAUSE ADMIN COMMITTED TO SUPPORTING LON NOL. BOMBING WILL END IF SOMETHING WORKED OUT IN HAK- THO TALKS, OR CONGRESS VOTES AS IT RECENTLY DID.

16. POST' S RICHARD LYONS (PHINQ) CONSIDERS LAST WEEK' S HOUSE VOTE AGAINST TRANSFER AUTHORITY DEMO PARTY VICTORY ENGINEERED BY FRESHMEN AND CONVERTED SENIOR MEMBERS. OF 27 DEMO FRESHMEN, 25 CAST ANTI-BOMBING VOTES. NINETEEN SENIOR DEMOS WHO HAD GENERALLY SUPPORTED ADMIN SWITCHED TO OPPOSE FURTHER US MILITARY OPERATIONS IN CAMBODIA. 23 OF 40 MEMBERS OF HFAC, AND 14 OF 24 DEMOS ON HASC, VOTED TO STOP BOMBING.

17. LAT' S LESLIE (MAY 14), IN PP, WRITES PIECE ENTITLED, " CAMBODIA GOES ITS WAY DESPITE HEAT, POLITICS, ASTROLOGY AND WAR." SAYS IN SOME CASES EVACUATIONS OF FOREIGN EMBASSY DEPENDENTS ARE MORE RESPONSE TO POLITICAL REALITIES THAN MILITARY ONES. WHEN TROUBLES CAME IN APRIL, SEEMED LIKE WELCOME OPPORTUNITY FOR AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT, WHICH HAS BEEN TRYING TO LIMIT INVOLVEMENT IN CAMBODIA, TO REDUCE AUSTRALIAN PRESENCE. AUSTRALIAN CIVILIANS WERE NOTIFIED MIGHT BE GOOD IDEA TO LEAVE, AND SOME DID. WITHIN COUPLE OF WEEKS, LIFE

SEEMED RETURNED TO NORMAL, AND MOST OFFICIALS STARTED
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CONSIDERING HOW TO GET FAMILIES BACK TO PP. BUT ON
MAY 3 AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY DISTRIBUTED SECOND "FOREBODING"
NOTE TO COUNTRYMEN IN PP SUGGESTING THEY LEAVE. LESLIE
SAYS CIVILIAN CASUALTIES PROBLEM ONE OF MOST CONTROVERSIAL
SINCE US BOMBING BEGAN. US EMBASSY OFFICIALS SAY
VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE VERIFY REPORTS OF HIGH CIVILIAN
CASUALTIES. AS IF TO PROVE CONCERN, OFFICIALS REGULARLY
END INTERVIEWS BY ASKING JOURNALISTS IF THEY HAVE
HEARD ANYTHING ABOUT CIVILIAN CASUALTIES. JOURNALISTS
ARE TOLD EMBASSY STAFF TOO SMALL TO DO COMPLETE
INVESTIGATION, AND ARE ASKED TO PASS ON WHATEVER THEY
LEARN ABOUT SUBJECT. RUSH

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NMAFVVZCZ
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 10 MAY 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 MAY 1973
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973STATE092774
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: EA/ P: STAFF: PP
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730560/abqcemnn.tel
Line Count: 289
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN EA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: kellerpr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 AUG 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03-Aug-2001 by reddocgw>; APPROVED <17-Aug-2001 by kellerpr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> gwr 980217
Subject: n/a
TAGS: PFOR, US, XC, PFOR
To: SAIGON INFO BANGKOK
PHNOM PENH
VIENTIANE
CANBERRA
JEC PARIS
WELLINGTON
SEOUL

LONDON
PARIS
MOSCOW
TOKYO
BUDAPEST
JAKARTA
DANANG
BIEN HOA
NHA TRANG
CAN THO
MANILA
CINCPAC
OTTAWA
WARSAW

Type: TE

Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005